

Sheep Creek Vegetation Management

Recreation Report



Prepared by:
Benjamin Walker
Recreation Specialist

for:
La Grande Ranger District
Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

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Introduction

This document describes the recreation resources within the Sheep Creek Vegetation Management project area and the effects of the proposed activities. The focus is on existing recreation activities, primarily dispersed recreation, firewood gathering, and snowmobile and OHV use.

The project area (PA) includes several designated OHV trails on the Winom-Frazier Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) Trail System, also shared with the Umatilla NF. There are also several groomed snowmobile trails within the PA, which is also popular with hunters, firewood cutters, and campers.

The analysis area includes 29,935 acres on the La Grande Ranger District.

The Purpose of this project is to manage and enhance the timber and vegetation resources in a manner consistent with the direction in the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan as amended (LRMP).

Issues Addressed

We received public support for Off-highway vehicle (OHV) enhancements within the Winom-Frazier trail system.

Forest Plan Direction

Since the construction of new recreation facilities or reconstruction of existing recreation facilities is not proposed for Sheep Creek, this report focuses on the harvest activities and fuel treatments and their effect on the recreation setting, visitor opportunities, and OHV trail improvements.

In reviewing the 1990 Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) (WWNF, 1990), the goal for the Recreation resource is to "...provide a wide variety of recreation opportunities in an attractive setting, and make those opportunities available to all segments of society."

Desired Future Conditions

The Forest Plan also describes a desired future condition (DFC) in 10 and 50 years. The following summarizes the 10-year DFCs that apply to Sheep Creek:

- Providing an increased emphasis of recreational opportunities for users
- Retaining the range of current recreation uses yet recognizing there will be changes in the amount and location of some opportunities
- Some semi-primitive opportunities will be lost to development, but quality semi-primitive areas will remain to meet demands
- Opportunities for trail-related recreation within other management areas will be available
- Dispersed recreation sites will retain their desired character although surrounding lands will often change significantly due to management activities
- Fuelwood will continue to be available yet may be more difficult to obtain

Recreation Activities

Although no specific recreation use studies were completed for Two Eagle, inferences can be made to the typical types of activities that occur in the project area based on a national recreation survey. In 2019 the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest (WWNF) conducted the National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) (WWNF, 2021) survey to gather information about recreation visitor satisfaction, activities and use levels. One product of the survey revealed the primary and overall participation levels for various activities.

Table 1. Participation in WWNF Recreational Activities (Top 10 only)

Top activities on the WWNF	Percent of visitors who participated in this activity	Percent of visitors who participated in this as their primary activity
Hiking / Walking	43.3	14.3
Viewing Natural Features	42.9	8.3
Viewing Wildlife	37.3	3.2
Driving for Pleasure	35.4	12.5
Relaxing	22.6	5.0
Fishing	14.1	9.4
Developed Camping	13.4	3.9
Hunting	11.4	11.3
Visiting Historic Sites	11.3	0.7
Nature Center Activities	10.8	3.2

Some of the other participated activities from the WWNF survey were: Gathering Forest Products (10.1%), Picnicking (8.3%), Primitive Camping (7.4%), Motorized Trail Activity (2.9%), Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use (2.4%), and Snowmobiling (1.3%)—all of these activities are among those identified within the Sheep Creek PA.

The highest percent of survey respondents were from; within 26-50 miles of the forest (22.0%), within 201-500 miles of the forest (20.0%), within 101-200 miles of the forest (17.7%), and within 0-25 miles of the forest (16.7%). A total of 10.2% of visitors travelled to the forest from greater than 500 miles away.

During their time on the forest, visitors spent an average 10.5 hours on the forest, averaging 2.0 hours at developed day use sites, 53.3 hours at developed overnight sites, and 4.5 hours at undeveloped areas. About half of visits to this forest last less than 5 hours, although the average duration is around 23 hours. The median length of visits to overnight sites is about 43 hours, indicating many are multiple-night stays. About 60% of visits come from people who visit at most 5 times per year. Very frequent visitors are rare: about 10 percent of visits are made by people who visit more than 50 times per year.

Although inferences can be made from NVUM survey or from local manager's observations about the types of uses that occur within the Sheep Creek PA, no specific information is available to better understand why visitors come to this area. One reason for visitation to an area may be linked to a visitor's 'sense of place.' Sense of place is the human connection to a place and may involve meanings and values that facilitate intimate connections with geographical areas (Farnum, et al., 2005). This is an individual's attachment to a place based on both internal (i.e. emotional, personal, social, cultural, activity) and external factors (i.e. scenic, aesthetic, landscape). It also varies between residents who often feel that they have a unique, special, privileged sense of place, and tourists or regular visitors who also have strong attachments to places. Since this is an individual's 'human connection' to a place, it is

anticipated that a variety of comments and reactions to management proposals will be received. However, managers face a challenge in that there will be multiple senses of place and a variety of possibly conflicting meanings and attachments amongst users.

Dispersed Recreation

Visitors participating in dispersed recreation activities do not primarily use or rely upon developed sites such as campgrounds, or picnic areas to conduct their activity. However, they may use a developed site to support their activity, such as parking at a trailhead or getting drinking water from a campground, but their main time is spent away from the developed sites. All the activities listed in Table 1 above (except Developed Camping and Nature Center Activities) could be viewed as dispersed recreation activities. Other ones which may be seen in the project area include activities like OHV use, gathering forest products, picnicking, and snowmobiling.

Dispersed camping is a popular activity for overnight users who do not camp in a developed campground. Within the Sheep Creek PA there are approximately 35 identified dispersed campsites. These campsites receive low to moderate use beginning in late spring with most sites showing heaviest use during the fall hunting season. They are identified by their rustic user-built features such as rock fire rings, tables, and meat poles (to hang big game). The campsites are primarily located in flat areas off main transportation systems adjacent to water sources like streams and meadows. Camp sizes vary but the average ones can accommodate 1-2 vehicles with larger ones hosting 3-4 truck/trailer or RV units. Many of these campsites have been used for decades with some sites showing soil compaction and a loss of vegetation.

As shown in Table 1 above, other types of dispersed recreation occur year-round. Visitors enjoying these recreational pursuits may use forest roads as transportation networks (i.e. OHV riders, snowmobile riders, driving for pleasure, viewing wildlife), or just travel cross country away from roads and trails (i.e. hunters, viewing nature, fishing, hiking or walking). Recreationists who pursue dispersed activities often do so for a combination of desires to; be away from crowds, seek solitude, enjoy nature (scenery, geology, wildlife) and cultural sites, seek challenges or adventure, or wanting to be more self-reliant.

Currently, OHV use can occur both on designated open roads, closed roads, trails and in many cross-country locations within the Sheep Creek PA. Part of the Winom-Frazier OHV Complex includes trails within the PA and may be affected. Overall motor-vehicle use in the area is light, yet it does increase during the big-game hunting season.

Developed Recreation Sites

There are no developed recreation sites located inside the Sheep Creek PA. The Umapine Campground is approximately 5 air miles northwest of the project boundary and is a popular camping area and trailhead for the Winom-Frazier OHV Complex. Although some project activities will occur near or adjacent to Umapine Campground, no activities are currently planned within the site.

Designated OHV Trails

There are approximately 21.5 miles of designated OHV trails within the project area. These trails utilize a system of decommissioned and closed roads, as well as designed and constructed OHV trails. Almost half of the total 52.1 miles of OHV trails from the WWNF's portion of the Winom-Frazier OHV Complex are located within the Sheep Creek PA, and the rest are adjacent to it:

Table 2. Winom-Frazier OHV Trails within Sheep Creek PA

Trail Number	Trail Name	Trail Miles within Sheep Cr PA
O-1932	BIG RIDGE OHV	6.48
O-1932A	OUTLAW OHV	3.05
O-1941	CHICKEN HILL OHV	9.75
O-1941A	CHICKEN HILL OHV - A	0.38
O-1945	CHICKEN ROCK OHV	1.82
		21.48

Snowmobile Trails

Several FS roads within the PA are groomed in the wintertime for snowmobile use. Depending on snow conditions, other small roads within the Sheep Creek project area might also be used by winter recreationists. These roads are closed to motorized use by full sized vehicles in the winter months. Almost 30 miles of groomed snowmobile trails are located within the Sheep Creek PA:

Table 3. Snowmobile Trails within Sheep Creek PA

Trail Number	Trail Name	Trail Miles within Sheep Cr PA
S-5100	51 ROAD SNOWMOBILE	7.56
S-5160	TIN TROUGH-TONY VEY SNOWMOBILE	6.97
S-5182	SHEEP CREEK SNOWMOBILE	10.77
S-5184	5184 ROAD SNOWMOBILE	2.47
S-5185	CHICKEN HILL SNOWMOBILE	1.87
		29.64

Permitted Uses:

Some recreational activities are managed under permits which allow recreationists or operators to do certain activities under the terms of a permit. These permits include gathering firewood, gathering forest products like mushrooms, hunting and recreation special use activities. Use of these permits can be considered 'recreational' since visitors often participate in them for primary or secondary forms of enjoyment.

Annually the WWNF sells over 2500 personal use firewood permits and over 1900 forest product permits like mushroom and Christmas tree tags. Each permit has terms and conditions which guide uses and locations for the activities. Although no data is available for how many permits are used in the Sheep Creek analysis area, these activities can generally occur in most areas outside of riparian areas, old growth areas, tree plantations, and other special designated locations described on the permits.

There are currently no permitted outfitter/guide operations or other special use authorizations within the Sheep Creek PA.

The Sheep Creek PA lies within the Starkey Game Management Unit. The area is popular during big game bow and rifle seasons in late summer and fall, and turkey hunting in the late fall and early spring. Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife will continue to offer hunting opportunities in this area as part of their management of big game.

Road Access: See Transportation Report.

Environmental Consequences

Methods

The method of analysis included:

- A review of the appropriate Forest Service policy and goals, objectives, and standards of the Forest Plan
- Project site visits
- A review of Forest-level recreation use surveys
- A review of the USDA Forest Service literature related to recreation management (i.e. sense of place)
- Data base queries for the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest GIS data base queries (i.e. dispersed recreation points, developed recreation points, management areas)
- Data base queries for the USDA Forest Service I-web data base

The existing condition was compared with possible changes to recreation use if alternatives were implemented.

Spatial and Temporal Context for Effects Analysis

The environmental effects will be discussed in different timeframes. For direct and indirect effects, a short term for recreational visitors is viewed as occurring within two years (or 2 visitation seasons from the beginning of the implementation activity (i.e. harvest, post-harvest activities and prescribed fire treatments are on-going). Long term is viewed as a period ranging from two to ten years after initiating the implementation activity (i.e. harvest and post-harvest activities are done).

No Direct, Indirect, or Cumulative Effects

The following activities in the action alternatives would have a negligible potential to effect recreation opportunities in the project area:

- Danger tree removal
- Watershed Enhancements

These activities will not be discussed further in this analysis.

Direct and Indirection Effects to Recreation

Alternative 1 -- No Action

There would be no direct or indirect effects under Alternative 1. Vegetation densities or characteristics would not be modified, and the forest would continue to be influenced by natural processes and limited management actions, such as fire suppression. Since no implementation activities will result under this alternative, no change is anticipated in the number of visitors, frequency, or season of use in dispersed recreation activities, developed recreation sites, trails, or permitted uses. Recreational visits within the project area would remain near the same levels as previous years and under this alternative traditional use patterns and recreational opportunities would not be impacted. Hunting, hiking and other dispersed recreation and permitted uses access and opportunities are expected to remain unchanged.

Alternatives 2 and 3

The specific project activities with potential to impact recreation are common to Alternatives 2 and 3. All these actions propose different levels of activities but the effects to the public involved in different recreation endeavors common to the area are relatively similar. Both alternatives would include four main project activities that could affect recreation:

- **Timber harvest and thinning** (i.e. commercial harvest of timber, commercial, noncommercial, improvement, and riparian thinning)
- **Post-thinning activity fuels treatments** (i.e. grapple pile, hand pile/burn)
- **Prescribed fire** (i.e. post-harvest activity fuels treatment and 'standalone' prescribed fire prescriptions)
- **Road and Access activities** (i.e. danger tree removal along open system haul roads, haul roads, temporary road construction, road realignment, road decommissioning, OHV route designation etc.)

A review was made of the project proposal for all action alternatives. The Sheep Creek project activities are within these Goals, Standards and Guidelines because:

For the Roaded Natural ROS class:

- Timber harvest and thinning is allowed within this ROS class and is scheduled as part of the project. (See Forest Vegetation Specialist Report)

- Visual Quality Objectives (VQO) of 'retention' and 'partial retention' will be retained as seen from roads and trails. See Scenery Specialist Report.
- Access generally will be retained on single or double lane dirt/gravel roads
- Road management objectives will continue to accept or encourage use by dispersed recreationist in highway vehicles (except the proposed road closures summarized below)
- No development scale changes are proposed for developed sites or dispersed recreation sites.
- It is anticipated that use densities in people at one time (PAOT) per acre range between 0.04 and 0.25 density includes averaging in developed sites will remain the same.
- There are no proposals related to interpretation.

For the Roaded Modified ROS class:

- Thinning and timber harvest will be carried out within the NFMA regulation of being shaped and blended with the terrain. (See Scenery Specialist Report and Forest Vegetation Specialist Report)
- No changes to road management objectives are proposed (except the proposed road closures summarized below).
- Dispersed recreation sites will be considered for timber harvest, slash cleanup, site preparation and other silvicultural practices prescriptions.
- Use densities of PAOT per acre should range between 0.008 and 1.2.
- Interpretive site placed near RHCA meadow enhancement unit

For the Semi-Primitive Motorized ROS class:

- Vegetation management will include limited regeneration cutting for the purpose of maintaining a healthy, attractive semi-primitive setting. (See Forest Vegetation Specialist Report).
- Harvest units will meet "foreground partial retention" visual quality objectives. See Scenery Specialist Reports.
- Motorized harvesting will occur over "primitive" road systems in the low public use season.
- No changes to road management objectives are proposed (except the proposed road closures summarized below).
- Use densities of PAOT per acre should range between 0.004 and 0.08 depending on the landscape's ability to absorb the sights and sounds of humans.
- There are no proposals related to interpretation.

For the Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized ROS class:

- Thinning and timber harvest will occur to improve and maintain a healthy, attractive, semi-primitive setting. (See Forest Vegetation Specialist Report)
- No new roads may be built.
- Motorized harvesting will be done during the low public use season.
- All activities must meet "foreground retention" visual quality objectives. See Scenery Specialist Reports.

- No changes to road management objectives are proposed (except the proposed road closures summarized below).
- Use densities of PAOT per acre should range between .004 and 0.08 depending on the landscape's ability to absorb the sights and sounds of humans.
- There are no proposals related to interpretation.

For Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines in MA1, MA1W, MA3, MA3A, and MA15

- The presence of dispersed camps is recognized as contributing to dispersed recreation in the project area
- Mitigations such as treatment of slash and harvest material, site cleanup, and notifying the public of on-going activities will be considered and efforts made to retain the natural character of the dispersed area. See Forest Vegetation, Visuals/Scenery Resources and Fire/Fuels and Air Quality Specialist Reports.
- Prescriptions for thinning, cleanup, site preparation, and prescribed burning will consider the environmental setting that contributes to the attraction of these sites for recreation purposes. The attempt will be made to retain this attractive character during and after treatments

Dispersed Recreation – Dispersed recreation activities will be affected by all four types of project activities mentioned above. In the short term, thinning and prescribed fire activities may restrict user access into a treatment unit due to safety purposes, or users may be discouraged from entering a unit due to the presence of equipment and workers. This may occur in peak summer visitations or during the fall hunting seasons. Downed trees, slash piles, loss of forest-products (i.e. mushrooms, berries), active fire and residual smoke will also discourage visitor use in an area. Noise and other disturbances may affect the quality of the recreation experience for an individual regardless of the proximity to the activity.

A change in natural features or landscape characteristics may elicit different responses in visitors. As discussed above one attraction to an area may be linked to visitors 'sense of place' (Farnum, et al., 2005). A visitor's sense of place includes attachments to external factors like natural features or landscape characteristics. Important landscape features may consist of a variety of tree species, an open or closed tree canopy, rock formations, water bodies, and natural appearing openings (USDA-FS, 1995). The proposed treatments such as harvesting trees, reducing slash or altering canopy cover will change or remove some of these natural features. In some cases, the changing landscape will displace or discourage certain types of dispersed recreational activities (i.e. studying nature, viewing wildlife). In other areas it may encourage new dispersed recreational activities (i.e. big game hunting, photography) not available under the previous landscape.

For Alternatives 2 and 3 there are dispersed camps within harvest units. Depending on the timing and proximity of the treatment, campers at these sites may be displaced or have a less quality

experience due to noise, equipment activity, and dust. Like camps within harvest units, campers may be displaced or have a less quality experience due to smoke, active fire, and equipment activity. In some cases, project activities may close or alter dispersed campsites that currently contribute to environmentally degraded conditions.

Direct effects to recreationists accessing the dispersed camps in the project area or other areas would occur on roads during haul periods. The presence of large trucks or an increased frequency of traffic may discourage road use to these sites as well as associated activities until the road work subsides. When roads are being constructed/reconstructed visitors may expect delays or closures during work periods. OHV activities may increase if roads are opened. Once temporary roads are closed, or system roads are decommissioned they will no longer be available for snowmobile access to backcountry areas. If roads are used for winter haul, they may be available for access by winter recreationists like cross-skiers which is uncharacteristic in most years due to closure by snow.

Long term effects of harvest and post-harvest treatments will elicit various responses from recreationists. Recreationist seeking more open stands of forest may enjoy increased scenery views, improved cross country skiing or snowmobiling, and some types of big-game hunting and wildlife viewing. Other visitors may view a loss of large trees and denser forest as a reduction in opportunities to view natural features and scenery, observe wildlife and take self-discovery hikes. Another long-term effect will provide safe and adequate road and trail access for the recreating public, through the cutting of danger trees and improving roadside visitor travel. This is also a long-term effect for developed recreation and permitted uses.

Developed Recreation – Although there are no developed recreation sites within the project area, access to adjacent developed sites may be delayed or restricted during haul periods, or road construction. The presence of large log trucks and other equipment on haul routes may discourage users from driving the main access route to developed sites or other associated activities outside of the developed recreation area. The noise, dust, smoke and equipment activity during harvest, post-harvest and prescribed fires may affect the quality of the recreation experience for a visitor regardless of the proximity to the activity. The frequency and intensity of these activities may vary from a few hours to several weeks. Some loss or change of vistas, scenery, natural features, or wildlife viewing opportunities may result with the vegetation treatments and prescribed fire activities visible from the developed sites.

OHV Trails – The O-1932 Big Ridge, O-1932A Outlaw, O-1941 Chicken Hill, O-1941A Chicken Hill A, and O-1945 Chicken Rock OHV trails are located within the project area. Use and access may be affected by the proposed activities and associated traffic and these trails may be temporarily closed for safety reasons. Portions of the 5164, 5164-180, 5164-182, 5164-200, 5182-580, 5160-012, 5160-014, 5160-043, 5160-045, 5175-010, 5182-800, 5182-035, and 5182-040

roads may become designated OHV trails after project completion, potentially adding **6.98** miles to the OHV trail system. Noise, dust, smoke and equipment activity during harvest, post-harvest and prescribed fires may affect the quality of the trail users' experience as well. Modifications to trails made to facilitate project activities may diminish the recreation experience. This would eventually return to a more natural appearance over time as vegetation reestablishes.

Snowmobile Trails – Several Forest System Roads have been designated snowmobile trails. All these trails within the analysis area serve as groomed snowmobile trails during the winter months. A local snowmobile club grooms the trails when there is adequate snow coverage, typically between the months of December and March. These trails have the potential to be impacted if a designated snowmobile route is plowed for winter haul. Coordination with the local snowmobile clubs may alleviate the concern if alternate temporary routes are groomed during the short term.

Permitted Uses – All permitted uses are authorized under the term and conditions of a permit which allow activities not available to a non-permitted user. Most of these uses are intrinsically tied to road access, and the removal of forest products is dependent upon specific areas or vegetation. Permitted uses will be affected by all four project activities mentioned above. Like dispersed recreation, timber harvest, post-harvest, and prescribed fire activities have short term effects and may restrict or discourage entry into a harvest unit. Depending on the level of treatment activity, permit users may be displaced to other areas inside or outside the project area. Increased obstacles like downed trees and slash piles, or loss of forest-products (i.e. mushrooms, berries) will also change harvest patterns. Residual smoke, dust, fire, noise, and equipment activity is also not conducive to a quality recreation experience. The same effects for road use described in 'Dispersed Recreation' is also applicable to this recreation use. If roads are used for winter haul, they may be available for access by winter recreationist like Christmas tree cutters who normally do not have access in many roads during the winter due to deep snowpack. Firewood cutters may find some benefits from roadside 'salvage' but may lose opportunities if firewood is removed from a unit as part of the fuel reduction prescription.

Long term effects of harvest and post-harvest treatments will solicit various responses from permit users. Permit holders, like mushroom pickers, will find short term benefits from open, disturbed mixed-conifer forest stands, whereas berry pickers may view the loss of berry patches as a negative impact.

Cumulative Effects

Past projects and actions which have affected recreation uses include timber harvest, road construction, and recreation uses. Residual effects of past timber harvest influences dispersed recreation activities by displacing some uses (i.e. big game hunters may go to areas with more

denser canopy covering, berry pickers may go to areas where plants are more abundant) whereas it may have encouraged other uses (i.e. open areas allow better viewing background scenery). Road construction has had both a positive and negative effect. It has been viewed by some users as increasing access to areas yet has had a negative affect for non-motorized users who may have previously used an unroaded area. The allowance of cross- country travel has affected some non-motorized recreation activities due to sight, sound, and emissions of vehicles. The establishment of dispersed camps has provided traditional camp sites by making user created routes to the sites and expanding the 'camp-able' area.

Compliance with Forest Plan and Other Relevant Laws, Regulations, Policies and Plans

Forest Plan Recreation Resource Goal - The project will meet this goal because the current wide variety of recreation opportunities will still be available to all segments of the public during and after project implementations. The elimination of any recreation opportunity is not part of the project alternatives. All action alternatives will meet the visual quality objectives as directed in the Forest Plan (See Visuals/Scenery Resource section).

Desired Future Conditions- The project will meet the DFCs because wide variety of recreation opportunities will still be available to all segments of the public during and after project implementations. However, there may be changes in the amount and location of some opportunities in the short term due to harvest activities and fuel treatments. Quality roaded natural opportunities will remain on most of the project area. Trail related activities may be affected by the project in the short term but should be added to after completion. Harvest activities and fuel treatments will change the surrounding lands adjacent to some dispersed recreation sites. Fuelwood permits will still be issued under the terms of the permit for areas for many locations within the project area.

ROS - The ROS goals will be met for the Roaded Natural setting because the project involves timber harvest activities with compliance of the Visual Quality Objectives (VQO). (See Visuals/Scenery Resource section). Road management activities will continue to provide for dispersed recreation. The project does not propose any changes to the dispersed site development levels, developed site user densities, or any interpretation developments. The ROS goals will be met for the Semi-Primitive Motorized setting because the project involves timber harvest activities with compliance of the VQOs (See Visuals/Scenery Resource section). Motorized harvesting from primitive roads will be conducted during low public use periods. Public access on road and trails will remain with the allowed difficulty range, and road management objectives. The project does not propose any interpretation developments.

Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines

FP #6. - *There are no long-term proposals to decrease winter recreation opportunities. Some short-term opportunities may result with wintertime hauling or activities in harvest treatments.*

FP #7. - *Snowmobile trails have the potential to be impacted if a designated snowmobile route is plowed for winter haul. Coordination with the local snowmobile clubs may alleviate the concern if alternate temporary routes are groomed during the short term.*

FP #11. - *No changes are proposed that will modify the ROS classes at the developed sites.*

FP #13. - *There are no outfitter and guides in the project area.*

FP #14. - *Special areas will protected be as part of the harvest activities and fuel treatments.*

FP #15. - *See Transportation System section for a discussion on the Forest Travel Management Plan.*

Forest Plan Management Areas

MA1, S&G #17 - *Harvest and operational prescriptions will be developed to retain the attractive characteristics of the dispersed sites during and after treatments.*

MA3 & 3A, S&G #14 – *Protect and maintain existing trails that serve a continuing purpose and appear likely to be used in the future.*

MA15, S&G #12 - *Existing trails will be maintained and new trails may be constructed where they serve a valid purpose.*

MA15, S&G #14 - *The project does not propose any change to the Roded Natural ROS class in MA 15 or other parts of the project area.*

Indicators and Summary of Effects

To display the differences between alternatives, indicators have been identified that affect the recreation activities. The **qualitative** rationale is summarized below.

Table 3 – Indicators

Indicators	Effects Summary
Acres of Timber Harvest (commercial harvest of timber, post-harvest noncommercial thinning, and noncommercial thinning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricts/discourages access into harvest units due to closures or work activity • Discourages/displaces use due to physical obstacles (i.e. slash), dust and noise • Decreases of habitat for forest products (i.e. berries) or increases habitat for forest-products (i.e. mushrooms)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases localized use by visitors wanting more open stands, and decreases localized use by visitors wanting more closed or untreated stands, and larger trees Loss or change of vistas, scenery, natural features, or wildlife viewing opportunities from developed sites Increases roadside safety from hazard tree removal
Acres of Post-harvest Fuels Treatments (grapple pile, hand pile/burn)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restricts/discourages access into units due to closures or post-harvest activity Discourages/displaces use due to physical obstacles (i.e. slash piles), and noise Decreases habitat for forest products (i.e. berries) and increases habitat for forest-products (i.e. mushrooms) Increases localized use by visitors wanting more open stands, and decreases localized use by visitors wanting more closed or untreated stands, and larger trees Loss or change of vistas, scenery, natural features, or wildlife viewing opportunities from developed sites
Acres of Prescribed Fire (post-harvest activity fuels treatment and ‘standalone’ prescribed fire only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restricts/discourages access into treatment units due to closures or work activity Discourages/displaces use due to active fire or residual smoke Loss or change of vistas, scenery, natural features, or wildlife viewing opportunities from developed sites and dispersed areas
Miles of Road Reconstruction (Deferred maintenance on open/closed roads, road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restricts/discourages access into dispersed area or developed sites due

realignment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to work activity • Loss of access after temporary roads closed • Increases roadside safety from hazard tree removal
Miles of Temporary Road Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporarily decreases opportunities for dispersed activities away from motorized uses
Miles of Danger Tree Removal along Roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases visitor safety
Miles of Road Decommissioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreases motor-vehicles use when roads are decommissioned • Increased opportunities for dispersed activities away from motorized uses

The following table displays the *quantitative differences* in units (acres/miles) for each of the indicators discussed in Table 6.

Table 6- Comparison of Alternatives (ALT)

Indicators	ALT 1	ALT 2	ALT 3
Acres timber harvest	0	12,785	8,320
Acres post-harvest fuels treatment	0	11,760	7,409
Acres prescribed fire	0	9,521	9,521
Miles road reconstruction	0	23.1	7.8
Miles temporary road construction	0	4.5	3.0
Miles of Danger Tree Removal along Roads	0	101.59	75.56
Miles road decommissioning	0	0.2	0.2

(Note- all numbers have been rounded up to 0.0)

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

There are no irreversible and irretrievable commitments to the recreation resource associated with any of the alternatives analyzed. The number, available types and use capacity for developed, dispersed and trail recreation activities would not be changed by the project proposal.

There are no irreversible and irretrievable commitments to the special use authorization because the current authorizations would still be available during and after project implementations. Such use is consistent with forestry management objectives and is in the public interest. The elimination of any special use authorization is not part of the project alternatives.

References cited:

- Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan.
- Forest Service Handbook 1909.12 Chapter 70
- National Recreation Inventory System – National Visitor Use Monitoring, 2008 data (NRIS-NVUM)
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Big Game Regulations

Questions:

1. Will there be any interpretation of the project, after completion to tell the public what we did and why?
- 2.